

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 remain pending in the present application. Claim 1 has been amended. Basis for the amendments can be found throughout the specification, claims and drawings as originally filed.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over De Molina ('239) in view of Buma, et al. ('554). Claims 4-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over De Molina in view of Buma, as applied to Claim 3 above, and further in view of either Heinz, et al. or Patzenhauer, et al. ('885). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Claim 1 of the present invention has been amended to define that the control unit always positions the vehicle chassis at a single specified distance from the unsprung portion by changing a pressure of the fluid in the spring based on a difference between the current vehicle height (the distance) and the specified vehicle height (the specified distance). A valve assembly is disposed between the shock absorber and the spring to control damping characteristics at the specified height based on the pressure of the fluid in the spring. Thus, the current system corrects the vehicle height and then it controls the damping at the correct height based on the pressure on the spring.

De Molina '239 does not control the height of the vehicle. De Molina controls the damping of the vehicle using the fluid pressure in the springs but the damping characteristics are controlled at whatever height the vehicle happens to be at in its currently loaded condition. Buma, et al. teaches positioning the vehicle at a target

vehicle height but this target vehicle height is not a constant value as can be seen in Figure 13. The target vehicle height varies depending on the longitudinal acceleration. Therefore, neither De Molina or Buma, et al., either alone or taken together, disclose, teach or suggest always positioning the vehicle at a single specified height and then adjusting the damping characteristics at this height as is now defined in amended Claim 1.

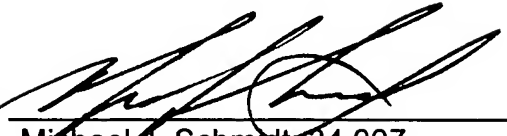
Thus, Applicant believes Claim 1, as amended, patentably distinguishes over the art of record. Likewise, Claims 2-16, which ultimately depend from Claim 1, are also believed to patentably distinguish over the art of record. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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By: 
Michael J. Schmidt, 34,007

HARNESS, DICKEY & PIERCE, P.L.C.
P.O. Box 828
Bloomfield Hills, Michigan 48303
(248) 641-1600

MJS/pmg